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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE; NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/WATERS

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TAGS: [KWBG](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [IS](#) [KDEM](#) [KPAL](#)
SUBJECT: YASER ABED RABBO URGES SERIOUSNESS ABOUT THE
INTERNATIONAL MEETING

Classified By: Acting Principal Officer Thomas M. Duffy, Reasons 1.4 (b)
) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary. PLO Executive Committee Secretary General Yasser Abed Rabbo told Staffdel Talwar in an August 18 meeting that he questions U.S. seriousness about the planned international meeting in November. Abed Rabbo said Gaza's prospects are difficult, and the government must demonstrate that it is doing everything possible to improve Gazans' lives. He insisted that PA President Abbas will not call early elections, but will publicly use the threat of them to put Hamas on the defensive. End Summary.

International Meeting: Seriousness and Attendees

¶2. (C) On August 18, Secretary General of the PLO Executive Committee Yasser Abed Rabbo told Staffdel Talwar that he hopes the U.S. will not let the current opportunity for peace pass, but that the U.S. plan for the proposed international meeting in November remains unclear. He said the meetings between PA President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert focus on generalities and lack details. He said the two meet one-on-one and discuss permanent status issues i.e., refugees, then Jerusalem, and the discussion does not go beyond general terms. He said he understands that Washington wants an Israeli-Palestinian Declaration of Principles similar to the 1994 Israeli-Jordanian Washington Declaration that preceded the peace agreement between Israel and Jordan, but the Palestinians want a more detailed document.

¶3. (C) Abed Rabbo said he believes U.S. seriousness about a political horizon will be determined by the situation with Iran, and that if confrontation with Iran is likely, he anticipates more pressure on the U.S. to move toward a political horizon as the cost of lining up Arab support on Iran. However, he said, confrontation with Iran will distract the U.S. and mean no attention to Palestinian concerns.

¶4. (C) Abed Rabbo said he believes the Saudis will only attend the international meeting if they think it will be serious, and added that if the Saudis do not attend and the meeting includes only Israelis, Palestinians, Egyptians, and Jordanians it will be unremarkable. He said he worries about the potential failure of the meeting and the possibility of another intifada, insisting the Palestinians cannot "go on like this every seven or eight years."

The Government, Elections, and Gaza

¶5. (C) Abed Rabbo stated that the new government is popular and Palestinians are giving it a chance to succeed,

but it must provide security and control the streets to maintain this popularity. He added that the government must demonstrate and be seen to demonstrate efforts to improve people,s lives especially in Gaza, i.e., resolving the current gas and electricity crisis.

¶6. (C) Abed Rabbo was emphatic that President Abbas will not call for early elections and that the implementation is currently impossible. He said Abbas is using the threat of elections as a "tactic" with the public to put Hamas on the defensive.

¶7. (U) Staffdel Talwar cleared on this cable.
DUFFY